

Message Text

CONFIDENTIAL

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ACTION ARA-06

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SAB-01 SS-14 SP-02 L-01 INR-05

PRS-01 PM-03 /034 W

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P 022057Z AUG 77

FM AMEMBASSY PANAMA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 3008

C O N F I D E N T I A L PANAMA 5511

STADIS//////////

LIMDIS

EO 11652: GDS

TAGS: PBOR, PN

SUBJECT: TREATY NEGOTIATIONS

1. WE DO NOT KNOW FULLY WHY THE PANAMANIAN GOVERNMENT PUBLISHED PRESIDENT CARTER'S LETTER AND GAVE THE PRESS DETAILS OF THE NEGOTIATIONS ON THE COMPENSATION AND NEUTRALITY ISSUES. ONE REASON, HOWEVER, IS VERY CLEAR: THE GOVERNMENT IS SMARTING UNDER OPPOSITION CHARGES THAT IT IS NEGOTIATING IN SECRECY, NOT LETTING THE PEOPLE KNOW WHAT IS GOING ON. IN VIEW OF THE CONSIDERABLE PUBLICITY ABOUT THE NEGOTIATIONS FROM AMERICAN MEDIA, THE PANAMANIAN'S SAW LITTLE REASON TO REMAIN SILENT.

2. BEYOND THAT, WE HAVE LITTLE EVIDENCE AS TO WHAT -- IF ANYTHING -- THE GOVERNMENT HAD IN MIND. IT SEEMS CLEAR TO US THAT FRIDAY'S PRESS CONFERENCE WAS NOT DESIGNED TO PRECIPITATE A CRISIS. IT MAY HAVE BEEN AIMED AT PUTTING SOME PRESSURE ON US. MORE LIKELY, THE GOVERNMENT WAS MERELY DEMONSTRATING TO ITS PUBLIC HOW TOUGH IT HAS BEEN AT THE NEGOTIATING TABLE AND HOW FIRM THE PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES IS.

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STATES NOW IS--PERHAPS IN PREPARATION FOR TAKING WHAT THEY CAN GET FROM THE AMERICANS ON THE MONEY SIDE. THE MODERATE CONTENT AND TONE OF THE ESCOBAR-ROYO PRESS CONFERENCE LEAD US TO BELIEVE THAT THIS WAS THE KICK-OFF RALLY TO SELL THE TREATY TO THE PANAMANIAN PEOPLE (BUT WITHOUT ASSUMING THAT A TREATY WILL NECESSARILY BE AGREED TO). FOR EXAMPLE, ESCOBAR GAVE A SPIRITED AND ABLE DEFENSE OF THAT PART OF THE

TREATY PACKAGE WHICH IS MOST CONTROVERSIAL DOMESTICALLY--THE
U.S.'S RIGHT TO DEFEND THE CANAL AFTER THE YEAR 2000.

3. WE DOUBT THAT THIS PUBLICITY WILL AFFECT THE PANAMANIAN
NEGOTIATORS' FUTURE FLEXIBILITY. THE TOUGHNESS OF THE LETTER
MAY GIVE THEM AN "OUT" TO ACCEPT OUR BEST OFFER: "CARTER MADE
IT CLEAR WE COULDN'T HAVE GOTTEN MORE." OR THEY COULD USE THE
CONTINUING WIDE DIFFERENCE IN FIGURES AS AN EXCUSE TO DELAY OR
BREAK OFF THE NEGOTIATIONS. BUT, IN THE FINAL ANALYSIS, FRIDAY'S
RATHER SPECTACULAR FLURRY OF PUBLICITY WILL NOT WEIGH HEAVILY
IN THE GOVERNMENT'S DECISION ON WHETHER TO ACCEPT WHATEVER
OUR BOTTOM LINE MAY BE.

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: Z
Capture Date: 01-Jan-1994 12:00:00 am
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Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
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Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Sent Date: 02-Aug-1977 12:00:00 am
Decaption Date: 22 May 2009
Decaption Note: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 22 May 2009
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
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Executive Order: GS
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TAGS: PBOR, SOPN, EWWT, PN, US
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